

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 61, 64, 67, 70, and 71, and add new Claim 72, as shown below.

1. to 60. (Cancelled)

61. (Currently Amended) An equipment management system including a printer, a user terminal and a management server, comprising:

said user terminal comprising:

a failure code transmission unit adapted to transmit a failure code to the management server via a network on the basis of a failure code notified by the printer,

said management server comprising:

a storage unit adapted to store a customer database constituted by user information for managing a user, a repair fee calculation table for calculating a repair fee estimate, and a price table for specifying a price of the printer of the user;

a check unit adapted to check whether the printer of the user is under warranty by looking up the customer database on the basis of user information received from the user terminal via a network;

an estimation unit adapted to, if it is checked by said check unit that the printer of the user is not under warranty, calculate the repair fee estimate by looking up the repair fee calculation table on the basis of the failure code received from the user terminal;

a determination unit adapted to specify the price of the printer of the user by

looking up the price table on the basis of the failure code, and to determine whether a ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is a predetermined value or more; and

a first transmission unit adapted to,

1) if it is determined by said determination unit that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate and new products information, and information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article,

2) if it is determined by said determination unit that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is not equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate, and information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article,

3) if it is checked by said check unit that the printer of the user is under warranty, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article, without transmitting information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate; and
a second transmission unit adapted to, when the printer runs out of ink,

determine whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the printer, and

1) if it is determined that the user has made the maintenance contract for the printer, transmit to a delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink,

2) if it is determined that the user has not made a maintenance contract for the printer, determine whether an ink purchase request is generated, and if the ink purchase request is generated, transmit to the delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink.

62. (Previously Presented) An equipment management system according to claim 61, wherein said storage unit comprises a part specifying table for specifying parts for a repair target and a delivery date specifying table for specifying a delivery date, and wherein said estimation unit specifies a part required for repair by looking up the part specifying table on the basis of the received failure code, and specifies delivery data of the specified part by looking up the delivery date specifying table on the basis of the specified part.

63. (Previously Presented) An equipment management system according to claim 61, further comprising a unit adapted to transmit a type of method for recovering a part for repair to a delivery company terminal if it is checked by said check unit that the printer of the user is under warranty, wherein the type of method is designated by a window at the user terminal for designating the type of method for recovering the part for repair.

64. (Currently Amended) An equipment management method in an equipment management system including a printer, a user terminal and a management server storing a customer database constituted by user information for managing a user, a repair fee calculation table for calculating a repair fee estimate, and a price table for specifying a price of the printer of the user, comprising:

a failure code transmission step of transmitting a failure code from the user terminal to the management server via a network on the basis of a failure code notified by the printer,

a checking step of checking whether the printer of the user is under warranty by looking up the customer database on the basis of user information received from the user terminal via a network;

an estimation step of calculating, if it is checked in said checking step that the printer of the user is not under warranty, the repair fee estimate by looking up the repair fee calculation table on the basis of the failure code received from the user terminal;

a determination step of specifying the price of the printer of the user by looking up the price table on the basis of the failure code, and to determine whether a ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is a predetermined value or more; and

a first transmission step of,

1) if it is determined in said determination step that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmitting to the user terminal via the network information for

making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate and new products information, and information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article,

2) if it is determined in said determination step that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is not equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmitting to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate, and information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article,

3) if it is checked in said checking step that the printer of the user is under warranty, transmitting to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article, without transmitting information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate; and

a second transmission step of, when the printer runs out of ink, determining whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the printer, and

1) if it is determined that the user has made the maintenance contract for the printer, transmitting to a delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink,

2) if it is determined that the user has not made a maintenance contract for the printer, determining whether an ink purchase request is generated, and if the ink purchase request is generated, transmitting to the delivery company terminal via the

network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink.

65. (Previously Presented) An equipment management method according to claim 64, wherein said management server stores a part specifying table for specifying parts for a repair target and a delivery date specifying table for specifying delivery date, and wherein said estimation step specifies a part required for repair by looking up the part specifying table on the basis of the received failure code, and specifies delivery data of the specified part by looking up the delivery date specifying table on the basis of the specified part.

66. (Previously Presented) An equipment management method according to claim 64, further comprising a step of transmitting a type of method for recovering a part for repair to a delivery company terminal if it is checked in said checking step that the printer of the user is under warranty, wherein the type of method is designated by a window at the user terminal for designating the type of method for recovering the part for repair.

67. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium for storing a program executed by a management server storing a customer database constituted by user information for managing a user, a repair fee calculation table for calculating a repair fee estimate, and a price table for specifying a price of a printer of the user, the program causing the management server to execute:

a checking step of checking whether the printer of the user is under warranty

by looking up the customer database on the basis of user information received from a user terminal via a network;

an estimation step of calculating, if it is checked in said checking step that the printer of the user is not under warranty, the repair fee estimate by looking up the repair fee calculation table on the basis of a failure code received from the user terminal;

a determination step of specifying the price of the printer of the user by looking up the price table on the basis of the failure code, and determining whether a ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is a predetermined value or more; and

a first transmission step of,

1) if it is determined in said determination step that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmitting to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate and new products information, and information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article,

2) if it is determined in said determination step that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is not equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmitting to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate, and information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article,

3) if it is checked in said checking step that the printer of the user is under warranty, transmitting to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article, without transmitting information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate; and a second transmission step of, when the printer runs out of ink, determining whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the printer, and

1) if it is determined that the user has made the maintenance contract for the printer, transmitting to a delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink,

2) if it is determined that the user has not made a maintenance contract for the printer, determining whether an ink purchase request is generated, and if the ink purchase request is generated, transmitting to the delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink.

68. (Previously Presented) A storage medium according to claim 67, wherein said management server stores a part specifying table for specifying parts for a repair target and a delivery date specifying table for specifying delivery date, and wherein said estimation step specifies a part required for repair by looking up the part specifying table on the basis of the received failure code, and specifies delivery date of the specified part by looking up the delivery date specifying table on the basis of the specified part.

69. (Previously Presented) A storage medium according to claim 67,

further comprising a step of transmitting a type of method for recovering a part for repair to a delivery company terminal if it is checked in said checking step that the printer of the user is under warranty, wherein the type of method is designated by a window at the user terminal for designating the type of method for recovering the part for repair.

70. (Currently Amended) An equipment management system including a printer, a user terminal and a management server, comprising:

said user terminal comprising:

a failure code transmission unit adapted to transmit a failure code to the management server via a network on the basis of a failure code notified by the printer,

said management server comprising:

a storage unit adapted to store a customer database constituted by user information for managing a user, a repair fee calculation table for calculating a repair fee estimate, and a price table for specifying a price of the printer of the user;

a check unit adapted to check whether the printer of the user is under warranty by looking up the customer database on the basis of user information received from the user terminal via a network;

an estimation unit adapted to, if it is checked by said check unit that the printer of the user is not under warranty, calculate the repair fee estimate by looking up the repair fee calculation table on the basis of the failure code received from the user terminal;

a determination unit adapted to specify the price of the printer of the user by looking up the price table on the basis of the failure code, and to determine whether a ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is a predetermined value or more;

and

a first transmission unit adapted to,

1) if it is determined by said determination unit that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate and new products information,

2) if it is determined by said determination unit that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is not equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate,

3) if it is checked by said check unit that the printer of the user is under warranty, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article, without transmitting information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate; and

a second transmission unit adapted to, when the printer runs out of ink, determine whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the printer, and

1) if it is determined that the user has made the maintenance contract for the printer, transmit to a delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink,

2) if it is determined that the user has not made a maintenance contract for the printer, determine whether an ink purchase request is generated, and if the ink purchase

request is generated, transmit to the delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink.

71. (Currently Amended) An equipment management server, comprising:

a storage unit adapted to store a customer database constituted by user information for managing a user, a repair fee calculation table for calculating a repair fee estimate, and a price table for specifying a price of a printer of the user;

a check unit adapted to check whether the printer of the user is under warranty by looking up the customer database on the basis of user information received from a user terminal via a network;

an estimation unit adapted to, if it is checked by said check unit that the printer of the user is not under warranty, calculate the repair fee estimate by looking up the repair fee calculation table on the basis of a failure code received from the user terminal;

a determination unit adapted to specify the price of the printer of the user by looking up the price table on the basis of the failure code, and to determine whether a ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is a predetermined value or more; and

a first transmission unit adapted to,

1) if it is determined by said determination unit that the ratio of the calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate and new products information,

2) if it is determined by said determination unit that the ratio of the

calculated repair fee estimate to the specified price is not equal to or more than the predetermined value, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate,

3) if it is checked by said check unit that the printer of the user is under warranty, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article, without transmitting information for making the user terminal display the calculated repair fee estimate; and a second transmission unit adapted to, when the printer runs out of ink, determine whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the printer, and

1) if it is determined that the user has made the maintenance contract for the printer, transmit to a delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink,

2) if it is determined that the user has not made a maintenance contract for the printer, determine whether an ink purchase request is generated, and if the ink purchase request is generated, transmit to the delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink.

72. (New) An equipment management system, comprising:

a first transmission unit adapted to, when failure information of a printer is received via a network, determine whether the printer of a user is under warranty, and

1) if it is determined that the printer of the user is under warranty, transmit

to a user terminal via the network information making the user terminal display a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article,

2) if it is determined that the printer of the user is not under warranty, transmit to the user terminal via the network information for making the user terminal display (i) a repair fee estimate calculated on the basis of the failure information and (ii) a window for designating a type of method for recovering an article to be repaired and a type of method for delivering the repaired article; and

a second transmission unit adapted to, when the printer runs out of ink, determine whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the printer, and

1) if it is determined that the user has made the maintenance contract for the printer, transmit to a delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink,

2) if it is determined that the user has not made a maintenance contract for the printer, determine whether an ink purchase request is generated, and if the ink purchase request is generated, transmit to the delivery company terminal via the network information for indicating a method of delivering an ink.